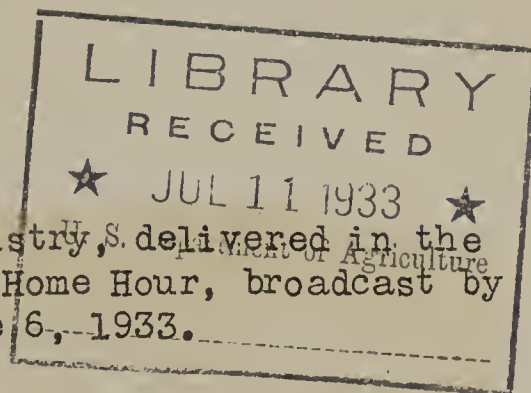


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 49 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday June 6, 1933.

Hello folks: During our little five minute garden session today I want first of all to remind you southern gardeners that this is the time of the year when the grass and the weeds generally take some of your gardens, that is if you don't refit the ground and plant a new crop just the minute one crop has gone by. Crabgrass has been called the worst weed that the southern gardener has to contend with but if you plant more tomatoes, beans, swiss chard, okra and other summer vegetables and keep them well worked you can not only keep the crabgrass and other weeds under control but you can also have a lot of good vegetables for use during midsummer when fresh foods are usually so scarce.

June is the month when weeds make a big start in northern gardens and a little extra attention will be needed this month to prevent them running away with our crops. Many's the time my father has said to me "Son I want you to go to the garden this morning and keep right at it until you get every weed out." Oh, what a job, and what a discouraging outlook for a boy whose mind was on going swimming, or fishing, and the rows in our old farm garden weren't the 25 or 40 foot kind either but they were about 150 feet long. Backache, sore knees, blisters on both hands, all were a part of the penalty for having a garden in which the soil was so rich that it produced millions of weeds, but Oh, what crops of good vegetables that garden did grow. About once a week my father would give the garden a thorough cultivation with a one-horse cultivator and that greatly reduced the hand work required to keep the garden clean.

The best time to kill weeds in your garden is when they first start and before they become established. The best way to kill weeds is by stirring the soil when it is reasonably dry. Most of the backache and hard labor of keeping our gardens free of weeds can be eliminated by having the whole garden laid off so that it can be worked with a horse, and in the small garden the use of a wheel or push hoe will save labor. I've often wondered how some of you folks who have those old-fashioned quilt-patch gardens with all of your crops in beds ever keep the weeds out of them. I'll admit that you do have some of the best gardens in the country but it must mean a lot of hand work and my idea is to get away from hand work as much as possible.

The hoe is perhaps the oldest and originally the most primitive of all our garden tools but the hoe has an important place, perhaps the most important place, among our home garden tools today. There's a knack in using a hoe too and it's important that you have a hoe that is of the right weight and adapted for the work you are doing. To begin you should have your hoe sharp, the blade should be smooth and free from rust, the handle should be smooth and straight, and above all your hoe should not be any heavier than is necessary to do the work. I have very little use for the old cotton-chopping hoe in my garden.

(over)

I find that no matter how thoroughly I cultivate my garden there is always a certain amount of hand weeding to be done, especially where I am growing beets, carrots, onions, and other small crops. I have a small scratcher with wires bent like the fingers of my hand that I found in a 10-cent store that is mighty fine for loosening the soil along the rows of beets and carrots. Or, you can make a hand scratcher by driving three wire brads through the end of a small piece of lath or thin board. A piece of strap iron bent in the form of a hook and one edge sharpened makes an excellent tool for getting the weeds out of the rows of small plants. A narrow trowel or even an old caseknife or a strong tablespoon will be found useful for getting the small weeds out of the rows. In weeding our garden crops the main point is to get the weeds out by the roots, otherwise very little will be gained by our work.

So much for weeds, the robbers of our gardens, now, a few suggestions about crops to plant during June. You southern gardeners will be planting collards, okra, broccoli for fall use, late tomatoes, sweet potatoes, Kentucky wonder and cornfield beans, black-eye peas and perhaps several other vegetables. I've found it extremely difficult to get certain seeds to start after the soil becomes heated and perhaps a little dry. First of all when you plant garden seeds in hot, dry soil be sure that the soil is fine and mellow, then firm it over the seeds. You can lay a board over the planted row and walk on the board to firm the soil, and if you desire you can leave the board over the row for a day or two to shade the soil and draw the moisture to the surface.

During June, you central and northern gardeners will be planting late potatoes, cabbage, sweet corn, tomatoes, celery, pole beans, more snap beans, beets and carrots to produce crops for storage and a great many other garden crops to fill out your food budget for the middle and late summer, also plenty for canning. I would say, that, all things considered, June is about the most important month in the northern home garden. During June we either enjoy the crops that we planted earlier then let the garden go for the balance of the season, - or we pitch in and make more plantings so as to keep the garden producing right up until cold weather.

Most of us find it rather difficult to transplant tomato and other tender plants during hot, dry weather. I have found that if you have the plants fairly well watered before you lift them from the plant-bed, then use plenty of water around their roots as you set them you will have few losses.

Goodbye and if nothing prevents, I'll be with you again next Tuesday.